

Winchester Public Schools

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

For General Release

Statement from School Superintendent William McAlduff September 10, 2009

There have been some questions raised about the availability of the President's September 8th speech to students in the Winchester Public Schools. I am writing to provide some context to our decision-making process. The decision on how to handle this event was made by the WPS Leadership Team. We trust our staff and administrators to act in the best interests of children. We make many decisions every day on behalf of students. The decisions were based solely on logistical issues such as technology capability and availability, schedules, and ever-present services to students. I assure you that neither politics nor censorship played any role in our decision.

Previously I held two discussions with our school district's Leadership Team about the plans for viewing the President's speech addressing school students. We decided that the best course of action regarding the President's speech was to have school principals, working with their staff, decide on whether the speech would be aired live, viewed as tape after the live viewing, or find other ways to incorporate the message into the curriculum. The process for making this decision is actually a good example of the collaborative work that is one of the hallmarks of the Winchester Public Schools.

I am extremely confident that our process and decisions were appropriate and I am equally confident in the ability of our administrators and staff to make good decisions. I am certain decisions were not based on either ideology or politics but rather a decision based on logistical issues in our schools involving technological capacity, scheduling and timing.

Moving forward, Winchester High School and McCall Middle School will be incorporating the President's address into social studies classes this week. Our elementary schools will also integrate the speech into their programs in varied methods.

The President's message is an excellent one. The Leadership team will continue to work with staff in finding ways to bring this message to our students in a manner that meet our needs and goals both as individual schools and as a district. If you wish to share the speech with your children a transcript of the President's remarks as well as the 19:00 minute video may be viewed on U.S. Department of Education's website:

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/academic/bts.html>